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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR T, VC AND EUR/PRA
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SECDEF FOR OSD(P)/STRATCAP
NAVY FOR CNO-N5JA AND DIRSSP
AIRFORCE FOR HQ USAF/ASX AND ASXP
DTRA FOR OP-OS OP-OSA AND DIRECTOR
NSC FOR LOOK
DIA FOR LEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2019
TAGS: [KACT](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [US](#) [START](#)
SUBJECT: START FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS, GENEVA (SFO-GVA-V):
(U) SECOND MEETING OF THE CONVERSION OR ELIMINATION AND
NOTIFICATIONS WORKING GROUPS, SEPTEMBER 25, 2009

REF: A. STATE 99070 AND 99072
[1](#)B. GENEVA 0812 (SFO-GVA-V-008)

Classified By: A/S Rose E. Gottemoeller, United States
START Negotiator. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is SFO-GVA-V-014.

[1](#)2. (U) Meeting Date: September 25, 2009
Time: 10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Place: Russian Mission, Geneva

SUMMARY

[1](#)3. (S) The second meeting of the Conversion or Elimination (Core) and Notifications Working Groups was held at the Russian Mission on September 25, 2009. The U.S. side explained the U.S. approach used to draft the U.S.-proposed Elimination Protocol, and explained the document's key elements (REF A). The Russian Head of Delegation, Ambassador Antonov, attended the meeting as an observer.

[1](#)4. (S) The U.S. side indicated that there appeared to be agreement on the principles that each side should have the right to decide which procedure(s) would be used to eliminate specific treaty accountable items, that costs should be reduced and flexibility maintained in its text and that this corresponded with Russia's concerns.

[1](#)5. (S) The Russian Delegation sought clarification on why

the United States had removed the term "conversion" from the protocol. The Russians also complained about the appearance of inequality in the U.S. draft, because it left procedures for elimination of mobile ICBMs and their launchers, as in START, but proposed new procedures for other items.

¶6. (S) The Russian Delegation proposed a new concept that would provide for visits to, and notification of movement of heavy bombers (HBs) equipped for non-nuclear armaments. However, the non-nuclear HBs would not be subject to the central limits of the treaty. The U.S. Delegation said that, under the U.S. proposal, such HBs would no longer be accountable and should not be subject to the treaty.

U.S. CONCEPTS AND
PHILOSOPHY OF ELIMINATION

¶7. (S) Elliott opened the Elimination WG meeting and delivered the following points on the key concept and elements behind the U.S.-proposed Elimination Protocol.

Begin points:

- In the U.S. view, elimination is the process of removing an accountable item from accountability by rendering it incapable of use for its original purpose. For example, rendering a SLBM launcher incapable of launching a ballistic missile.

- However, the U.S. side also believes it is entirely consistent with this concept that some items may be used for other purposes not inconsistent with the treaty. For example, altering an SLBM launcher for another use, so it is no longer capable of launching a ballistic missile, but is usable for another purpose, as we have done with the former Trident I system. We seek this flexibility due to the enormous cost of building new systems.

- We appreciate that this process must meet two fundamental criteria: 1) the eliminated item must not be usable for its original purpose; and 2) it must be visible to the other party. We differ with the Russian side in one aspect here, that in order to meet this latter requirement, national technical means (NTM) of verification may not always be suitable to confirm the change. We believe this will become apparent when the possessing side selects its procedure for elimination.

- Importantly, we agree in principle with the Russian view that each side should decide for itself the procedures to be used.

- However, we have proposed an approach that includes examples; choices from which one might pick. Our view is that if some of the procedures contained in START are useful we can include them, but not require them. I would also like to clarify a point on non-nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles. We are well aware of the Russian view on this matter. My question earlier this week was not intended to speak of this matter, but rather it was intended to address the issue of altering SLBM launchers to another use--not inconsistent with this treaty. We will leave the matter of non-nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles to our respective political leaders.

- Now, turning to our detailed explanation of this protocol, I would like to reiterate that the U.S. proposal for the Elimination Protocol draws on previous language from the START Treaty, while also offering new, more cost-effective options.

- I want to emphasize a point made by Colonel Ryzhkov earlier this week. We want to remove the rigid structure that can lead to difficulty in carrying out the obligations of this treaty, while preserving a sense of predictability

for both sides. START's Conversion or Elimination Protocol has served as a solid foundation to remove items from each Party's force structure and fulfill the fundamental obligation of reducing strategic offensive arms. Using similar language and procedures from the START Protocol, adapted and simplified, where possible, we hope to reinforce the U.S.-Russian relationship based on shared knowledge, understanding and expectations.

- I understand that the Russian approach is based on concepts drawn from the Moscow Treaty, capitalizing on the new relationship between the United States and Russia and the need for simplified, less costly measures. It is prudent that we, collectively, work to find an appropriate balance between the U.S. approach with our need for verification and the Russian approach with your need for less specific procedures.

- After studying the Russian-proposed Procedures for Conversion or Elimination, it is clear there are areas where we agree and areas where we need further clarification. I want to focus initially on the areas where the U.S. and Russian approaches agree.

- We note that your treaty Article VII provides language specifying conversion or elimination procedures that ensure that strategic offensive arms are rendered inoperable, precluding their use for their original purpose. The U.S. agrees with this approach. The key point is that the U.S. and Russia need to agree on the procedures to get to that state. Once an SOA is rendered inoperable, we believe there is no reason for it to be subject to the limitations of the treaty.

- Russia proposes that verification of elimination or conversion procedures shall be carried out by national technical means, notifications and visits. The U.S. agrees that notifications are an important part of the verification and transparency measures. However, the concept of NTM supplemented by undefined visits requires further clarification.

- Elimination procedures for silo launchers of ICBMs, mobile launchers of ICBMs, submarines undergoing SLBM launcher elimination, and heavy bombers shall remain visible to NTM. The United States agrees with this approach, but also notes that NTM only brings a certain level of confidence. Inspections coupled with NTM will raise the confidence that the procedures have been completed.

- Additionally, it appears there is some inconsistency with what is written in the U.S. Protocol and the Russian Annex and our respective Treaty Article VIIIs. This will require our attention to ensure the texts align in meaning and intent.

- The issue of the requirement for specificity in conversion or elimination procedures bears comment. I am sure you have noticed we did not change procedures for eliminating mobile ballistic missile systems. Our view is that because we do not possess such systems, we will seek the Russian view of procedures that might be less difficult and costly, but that will meet the fundamental criteria specified by the treaty.

- Colonel Ryzhkov, you stated in our first meeting that very specific conversion or elimination procedures with many people involved leads to a confrontational environment. You brought up examples, such as the issues with SS-25, SS-24 and Peacekeeper eliminations.

- The U.S. position is that specific procedures to some extent can also have quite the opposite effect. Specific procedures provide predictability, a clear understanding of the procedures, a certain way for confirmation and an appropriate level of transparency for verification. However,

the United States agrees with Russia that START contained procedures that were cumbersome and costly and in this new treaty the United States and Russia can develop procedures that are more efficient and less costly.

- Moreover, Russia asserts that all conversion or elimination can be verified through national technical means of verification. To aid national technical means of verification for SLBM launchers and heavy bombers, Russia proposes to have submarine launch tube hatches removed or destroyed and for heavy bombers to have basic design elements removed or destroyed.

- Additionally, for conversion of SLBM launchers, Russia proposes another precondition in that they have external or functional differences. This speaks to the need to verify that changes have been made and is consistent with the U.S. belief that national technical means will not be sufficient in all cases.

- Since our last session in the beginning of September, the United States has amended its views on conversion or elimination. The U.S. proposes to retain the concept of elimination in the treaty and as such we have proposed an Elimination Protocol.

- The United States believes that "elimination" is the process by which a Party alters an accountable item to make it incapable of being employed for nuclear armaments; i.e., its original purpose. Thereafter, it is no longer subject to the limitations of the treaty--both the numerical limits and the broader treaty limits.

- Under START, conversion procedures were applied primarily to heavy bombers and then only as a mechanism to re-categorize them as a heavy bomber of another category. There was no provision for a procedure to remove a heavy bomber from being subject to START's limitations while maintaining the possibility of its use for purposes not limited by the treaty.

- The United States proposes that the concept of "elimination" apply to a procedure to physically alter an item and the act of removing that item from accountability under the treaty. An SOA is either destroyed or is altered in such a way that it no longer can be used for its original purpose. In both cases, the SOA is eliminated for treaty purposes.

- Thus, the U.S. recognizes that methods short of physical destruction are equally advantageous to each Party, 1) as a means of removing an item from accountability under the Treaty, 2) to retain use of the item for purposes not inconsistent with the Treaty, and 3) to save costs.

- In this connection, the United States proposes a range of procedures to eliminate an item, any of which may be used by a Party for elimination.

- Additionally, the United States acknowledges that in the future a Party may develop a different procedure that was previously not considered during negotiations that may leverage advanced technologies or save time and money. In this instance, the United States proposes an option to use these procedures provided there is a sufficient level of transparency during the process.

- You will note that in several cases the United States proposes a pre-elimination demonstration. This demonstration would be an opportunity to provide, in advance, details of the elimination procedures.

- With this demonstration, the United States intends to create additional transparency and an opportunity for Russia to ask questions for U.S. consideration.

- For instance, the recent Minuteman III RVOSI One-Time Demonstration could be used as a model for success and cooperation, understanding and awareness.

End points.

18. (S) Ryzhkov asked Elliott to confirm that the United States proposed to drop the term "conversion" from the new text. Elliott responded in the affirmative and stated that the United States planned to only eliminate and not convert treaty accountable items. Ryzhkov indicated his understanding and asked Elliott to continue with the section-by-section description of the U.S.-proposed Elimination Protocol (REF A).

Begin points:

- Section I covers the Procedures for Elimination of ICBMs for Mobile Launchers of ICBMs and their Launch Canisters. Since the beginning of our talks on the START Follow-on Treaty, the United States has been clear about its view that the unique challenges associated with mobile missiles make it necessary to retain, in the new treaty, specific provisions for their elimination. The United States would encourage Russia to propose specific procedures to simplify mobile ICBM and launcher elimination. Again there needs to be a balance that will assuage U.S. concerns regarding their elimination and Russia's need for simpler and less costly procedures. However, the United States does propose the following changes. In Paragraph 1 we propose removing phased elimination (tied to SS-24s in Ukraine). In Paragraph 3 we changed wording to allow inspection at any time during elimination versus inspection of the entire process. In Paragraph 4(b) we removed wash-out and drilling procedures (tied to SS-24s in Ukraine).

- Section II covers the Procedures for Elimination of Silo Launchers of ICBMs. Overall, we removed references to silo training and silo test launchers. Under the U.S. concept, such launchers will not count as deployed launchers, so there is no need to subject them to treaty elimination procedures. In Paragraph 5 we added alternative procedures for silo elimination. In Paragraphs 7 to 10 the United States added inspection provisions. I would emphasize that items 7-10 include NTM for verification. Section III covers Procedures for Elimination of Mobile Launchers of ICBMs, Mobile Training Launchers and Fixed Structures for Mobile ICBMs. Overall we removed specific references to road mobile and rail mobile launchers.

- Our approach was to capture basic START procedures and add to them. Section IV, Procedures for Elimination of SLBM Launchers, has been modified. In Paragraph 7 covering newly proposed procedures, before the first elimination of an

SLBM launcher of each type, the possessing Party shall also exhibit an unmodified SLBM launcher of that type. In Paragraph 8 covering additional newly proposed procedures, eliminated launchers shall be subject to inspection within a 20-day period beginning on the date of notification of elimination.

- In Section V we deleted the procedures for soft-site launcher elimination. The U.S. approach would not subject soft-site launchers to the treaty.

- In Section VII (Renumbered to Section V), the procedures for the Elimination of Heavy Bombers have been modified. We removed references to former heavy bombers. Our proposed treaty removes the concept of former heavy bombers. We removed specific procedures for ALCM-equipped heavy bombers. In paragraph 2, we removed pre-elimination inspections. Inspection would be allowed within a 20-day window following completion of the elimination process. In Paragraph 4 we added alternative procedures for heavy bomber elimination. In Paragraph 6, for newly-proposed procedures,

before the first elimination of a heavy bomber of each type, the possessing Party shall also exhibit an unmodified heavy bomber of that type. Our objective is to create clarity in the process, not to create difficult or cumbersome procedures.

- Section VII (Renumbered to Section VI) covers the procedures for Removal from Accountability of ICBMs for Mobile Launchers of ICBMs as a Result of Flight Tests or Static Testing. We removed references to the first stage rule which is tied to Peacekeeper and which is no longer an existing type.

- Section VIII (Renumbered to Section VII) covers other Procedures for Removal from or Changes in Accountability. We removed references to silo training launchers, silo test launchers, soft-site launchers, and former heavy bombers. In paragraph 6 we removed the requirement to eliminate an item in accordance with elimination procedures when removed from static display (i.e., it is eliminated when it is placed on static display). Russia seems to have a similar view about static displays.

- In Section IX, renumbered to Section VIII, we cover the procedures for Elimination of Facilities. In Paragraph 1 we deleted the right to inspect completion of elimination of facilities. Paragraph two includes a description of "support equipment" from the START Supplemental Documents.

- If and when we agree on the concept, the United States will propose a relevant definition that elimination includes removing an accountable item from accountability by physical alteration, short of physical destruction, of the accountable item such that it can no longer be used for its original purpose. Let me make clear, this is not the entire definition. We propose to add this to the definition of elimination, which also involves destruction.

End points.

¶9. (S) Elliott again reiterated the U.S. concept of elimination after the Russian side asked a second time to clarify. Ryzhkov proposed a short break so that his side

could prepare additional questions.

WHEAT IN SILOS AND ROAD-MOBILES
TO RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

¶10. (S) Ryzhkov stated that the U.S. proposal not only changed procedures, but also fundamentally changed the overall concept of elimination. He took particular issue with the statement that items could be eliminated but be utilized for purposes not inconsistent with the treaty. Using this logic, Ryzhkov jokingly asked whether Russia could store wheat in its eliminated silos rather than destroying them by explosion. Elliott responded that the U.S. proposal provided a selection of elimination options, but that some eliminated items would not have any other useful purpose. As long as the new use was not inconsistent with the treaty then it would be possible, although not very practical.

¶11. (S) When asked by Smirnov about how Russian mobile launchers could be eliminated under the new U.S. concept, Elliott responded that while the launcher/erector mechanism had to be altered, the chassis of the vehicle could be used for another purpose. Ryzhkov then asked whether their Iskander SS-26 missile (Begin comment: The Iskander is short range ballistic missile, not an ICBM. End comment.) would be allowed to be deployed on an eliminated mobile launcher platform's chassis. Elliott responded that he would have to take this issue back to U.S. technical experts, but that on its face, it sounded reasonable if it was not inconsistent with the treaty.

SUBMARINES ARE MORE
DANGEROUS THAN ROAD-MOBILES

¶12. (S) Ryzhkov brought up the issue of conversion of U.S. SSBNs and opined that SSBNs were more dangerous than Russia's road-mobile launchers. A mobile launcher carried only one missile and traveled only within an area in Russia, while SSBNs carried a group of missiles and moved throughout the world's oceans. He asked Elliott to explain why the elimination procedures for Russian mobile launchers were more stringent than the procedures for SSBNs. Elliott responded that the simple answer was that the platforms were different and that nothing was unequal--both sides would have to show that its choice of elimination procedure fulfilled the new treaty's requirements.

¶13. (S) Adm Kuznetsov stated that the United States had created a new category of Strategic Offensive Arm (SOA). The Russians did not create any new categories in its proposal. Both sides were subject to the same procedures, and he felt the U.S.-proposed Elimination Protocol focused on the Russian systems and not the U.S. systems.

¶14. (S) Elliott responded that the United States was open to suggestions from the Russian side on elimination procedures for mobile missile launchers. He noted, however, that when new procedures were proposed, for example, elimination of U.S. SLBM launchers, a demonstration would have to take place

so the other side could understand the scope of the proposed elimination procedure. Elliott offered that Russia could do this for their mobile ICBMs and launchers.

YOU HAVE YOUR PROCESS,
WE HAVE OURS

¶15. (S) Ryzhkov turned to the elimination of ICBMs, specifically how the Russian process of burning missile propellant differed from the U.S. procedure of washing-out the missile's propellant. Since burning made the stages unusable, it was excessive to require further cutting. He opined that there were easier procedures, such as drilling holes in the sides of ICBMs, and that the current inspection procedures related to missile elimination were excessive and costly. Elliott asked Ryzhkov whether Russia could propose procedures with more specificity, perhaps in a short paper, the United States would consider them, as long as the procedures rendered the item unusable for its original purpose and that it was verifiable by the other Party. Elliott made the point that burning rocket propellant might be verifiable by NTM but that drilling holes in the sides of ICBMs was not.

ELIMINATION OF HEAVY
BOMBERS AND CONTINUED VISITS

¶16. (S) Col Zaitsev brought up the issue of eliminating heavy bombers. He said that it would not be difficult to restore a nuclear armaments capability to an HB that had been eliminated using U.S. logic. He said if the new U.S. Administration was exploring a more rigorous verification process, this seemed to be counter to that.

¶17. (S) Elliott responded by using the U.S. B-1 heavy bomber as an example of a heavy bomber that was converted, under START, from nuclear capable to non-nuclear capable. He noted further that the Russian side was well aware that the B-1 has not been used in a nuclear role since the early 1990s. He agreed that, if given enough time and money, anything is reversible. Elliott clarified the fact that the U.S.-proposed text did not use the term "irreversible", because it was an impossible concept to verify. Elliott

concluded that both sides needed to get past the thinking that all actions are meant to circumvent the treaty.

¶18. (S) Ryzhkov reminded the group that the new treaty was a bilateral undertaking and that both sides would be held to the same standards. He submitted that, in the new treaty, excessive and costly procedures should be eliminated all the while ensuring the verifiability of the limits.

¶19. (S) Colonel Ilin added that there were some common threads between the Elimination WG and the Inspection Protocol (IPWG). The new elimination concept presented by the United States was important and further study by the Russian side was required.

¶20. (S) Ryzhkov informed the group that the Russian side had completed its previous homework assignment on heavy bomber eliminations and Colonel Novikov would present the Russian views. Novikov provided the following comments.

Begin Novikov comments:

- In Russia's view, both nuclear and non-nuclear heavy bombers must be considered to be strategic heavy bombers

- Nuclear capable heavy bombers should be stationed separately from non-nuclear capable heavy bombers. Nuclear weapons should be not be stored at the same air base where non-nuclear heavy bombers are based.

- Even though non-nuclear capable heavy bombers would not be accountable under the central limits of the treaty for deployed heavy bombers, notifications on the location(s) and numbers of the heavy bombers should be recorded in the baseline MOU and its six-month updates.

- Photos and technical data should be exchanged, as these are tools inspectors use to confirm.

- Russia proposed visits to the non-nuclear capable heavy bombers to confirm the MOU data received.

- During these visits, the inspecting party would have the right to confirm that nuclear arms do not exist on the heavy bombers, the base(s) itself, and in their weapons storage areas.

- This approach corresponds to the U.S. provided approach.

End Novikov comments.

¶21. (S) Elliott asked whether visits to bases for non-nuclear heavy bombers would continue through the life of the treaty, to which Novikov responded that the visits would be conducted for the duration of the treaty. Russia's current proposed text would allow five visits per year. Elliott asked whether the reason for this new proposal was a confidence-building measure, since these procedures were not conducted under START. Ryzhkov replied that Elliott was correct and that the visits would be conducted to confirm that the non-nuclear heavy bombers had not been re-converted and that nuclear armaments were not being stored in the weapons storage area. Ryzhkov and Elliott both agreed that there were currently inconsistencies with language concerning visits and inspections in the respective protocols and annexes being discussed. Elliott stated that he felt the issues would become clearer as we moved through the process.

A FINAL NOTE ON NOTIFICATIONS
BEFORE CONCLUDING

¶22. (S) Concerning notifications, Siemon stated that he had reviewed an initial English translation of the Russian

proposal on notifications and that he had seen both similarities and differences in his initial reading. In some instances, the similarities were striking. Siemon's view was

to start with the similarities and work from there. Ryzhkov suggested that, at the right time, the notifications working group should break off from the elimination group. Siemon agreed that this made sense, but that it would come much later in the process.

¶23. (U) Documents exchanged. None.

¶24. (U) Participants:

U.S.

Mr. Elliott
Mr. Siemon
LCDR Brons
Lt Col Comeau
Mr. Dwyer
Dr. Fraley
Mr. Hanchett
Lt Col Leyde
Mr. McConnell
Ms. Purcell
Mr. Strauss
Ms. Gross (Int)

RUSSIA

Col Ryzhkov
Amb Antonov
Col Ilin
Mr. Izrazov
Ms. Kotkova
Mr. Kuznetsov
Mr. Leontiev
Col Novikov
Mr. Smirnov
Mr. Venevtsev
Col Zaitsev
Ms. Komshilova (Int)

¶25. (U) Gottemoeller sends.
GRIFFITHS